THE NIGERIAN SLUM/INFORMAL SETTLEMENT FEDERATION

DEMANDS IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF SENSELESS BAN ON STREET TRADING, ATTACKS ON INFORMAL ECONOMY, AND DEMOLITION / EVICTION EXERCISES; and

CALLS FOR PURSUIT OF INCREMENTAL FORMALIZATION INSTEAD AS PART OF A NEW PRO-POOR URBAN AGENDA FOR LAGOS IN HONOR OF WORLD HABITAT DAY & URBAN OCTOBER 2016 TO ENABLE US TO ACHIEVE THE SDGS

Today, the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation stands in solidarity with all the informal traders in Ikoyi, Victoria Island, and Lekki – as well as elsewhere in Lagos – whose livelihoods and daily bread are under attack by the Lagos State Government. We stand with impoverished persons living with disabilities who have come under attack for begging – which they do only for want of an alternative source of income. Finally, we stand with fishermen evicted from Ilubirin on 26 October 2016 and with all our hard-working members living in informal settlements across Lagos who live in the shadow of eviction.

We are the urban poor. We are organized. We are together. And we have a right to the city. Lagos is part of us and we are part of Lagos. We contribute to the economy and the social life of Lagos; without us the economy will fall and Lagos as we know it will be no more.

In the last months, we in the Federation have come out of the communities where we are already organized and working toward a better future here in Lagos to meet informal traders working in the areas presently under attack by the Lagos State Government. Our survey of hundreds of informal traders in Ikoyi, Victoria Island, and Lekki revealed that the average informal trader had been working in his location for more than 11 years. The average informal trader has been paying regular fees to Government to enable her work.

We know that the formal economy cannot grow and prosper without the informal economy. Where are formal sector employees to take their lunch, buy their recharge cards, etc.? The informal economy exists precisely because of gaps in the formal sector.

We call for Lagos State Government to abandon hardline policies that do not solve social problems. Instead, we should be partnering to develop strategies that enable informal workers to gradually pull themselves from poverty and enter a formal economy that creates realistic pathways for them. This will protect informal workers and increase Government revenues, rather than destroying a critical economy during a recession. Instead of arresting and detaining physically challenged persons, we should help them to learn skills so they can pursue alternative livelihoods to add to Lagos.

agbajowo la fin soya
pili pili toloton mi je po godo tolonayo
unity is our strength
Such policy approaches are part of the new pro-poor urban agenda we are calling for on this World Habitat Day 2016 and in honor of Urban October. Later this month, the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation will be joining government representatives, civil society, and organized movements of the urban poor from around the globe at the Habitat III Conference in Quito, Ecuador where the world will adopt a New Urban Agenda. This agenda will take a pro-poor, inclusive, participatory approach to sustainable urban development through incremental strategies that have proven elsewhere. We want to see such a global urban agenda to be adopted here in Lagos – our home, our city.

Such a pro-poor urban agenda is essential for us to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The SDGs include ambitious goals like eradication of poverty and participatory upgrading of all urban slums. We cannot achieve these goals by destroying the livelihoods of the urban poor and demolishing their homes and communities. We must adopt new approaches that will build on our strengths and capacities while actually providing real solutions to challenging social problems. Together, we can do it.

The Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation is a movement of the urban poor for our dignity and development, made up of community savings groups in over 70 slums and informal settlements here in Lagos – and growing also in other Nigerian cities. In addition to community-led economic empowerment through our savings groups, we work with our member communities to undertake citywide slum profiling, mapping, and enumeration to identify and understand our development challenges and opportunities to feed into our collective advocacy for a better urban future. We are supported by Justice & Empowerment Initiatives – Nigeria and affiliated with Shack/Slum-Dwellers International (SDI), a global network of slum dwellers’ federations in 36 countries around the world.

Please join hands with us to make possible a NEW, PRO-POOR URBAN AGENDA IN LAGOS, that will be OUR URBAN AGENDA. Thank you for your attention.

NIGERIAN SLUM/INFORMAL SETTLEMENT FEDERATION, LAGOS CHAPTER

For more information, please contact:
Akinrolabu Samuel – 08039214391, 07086391373
Bimbo Oshobe – 08170206386, 08036088915